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...NI UNO SOLO; NI UNA MENOS: INTRODUCTION FOR 'CONVERSATIONS ON THE NEW ERA OF FEMINIST INTERNATIONALISM'

NONPOLITICS COMMUNE, FEMINISM, INTERNATIONALISM, REVOLT

The following is a short introduction for a forthcoming discussion between comrades from an NYC feminist group and an Iranian-Kurdish collective in the first issue of The Reservoir—a new publication run out of Woodbine (NYC)

Ni uno solo-Ni Una Menos: this is one possible, though still too reductive, way of presenting the structuring dynamic that has characterized (more than) twenty years of insurrection and desire; twenty years of life rivaled only by twenty years of death.

In his foreword for the twentieth anniversary edition of *Colectivo Situaciones' 19 & 20: Notes for a New Social Protagonism*, Marcello Tari begins by way of elucidating the lasting significance of *Que se vayan todos* as the metonym for the destituent insurrection witnessed throughout Argentina in the December of 2001. As Tari puts it, and in rather decisive language, “*Que se vayan todos, que no quede ni uno solo!*” has become in these twenty years the slogan of every revolt, of every insurrection” (p. 5). That said, this metonym-cum-slogan is not the mystical form of ‘reason in revolt’ obscuring the political logic(s) shared between a heterogenous, coordinated, and combative network of struggles. By underscoring the way in which this slogan assumed the form of a generalized *demand* (‘everyone who claims to represent the people must go and not a single one must remain’), Tari rediscovers that cardinal methodological virtue expressed in every intervention undertaken by *Colectivo Situaciones* themselves: “The unfolding of popular powers in the city actualized the recurrent image of the commune. In this way, *Colectivo Situaciones*, which reasoned from the popular practices that spread in those years in the Argentine metropolis, gave us a question that today is probably the most urgent, necessary, and strategic: namely, the question of the *commune*” (p. 5).

That said, inquiries into ‘what is and/or was the commune?’ is the inheritance, *not* of the *damnés de la terre* nor of their revolutionary counterparts, but of scholars and experts. Contra any interrogation into some presumably transhistorical nature of the commune as freedom’s political form, the spectre of the commune now appears as *the riddle posed* to the communist desire for collective liberation. Or as Tari puts it, the communes of our present have shed the formalism of 1871 and persist as the *content* of struggles that remain ungovernable *in situ*: “[T]he commune, precisely, can no longer be understood as ‘the finally discovered political form’ of the government of the people or of the workers, as Marxism wanted, since it too functions first and foremost as a *situation*, territorial, cultural, existential and spiritual, expressing all that *is not governance*. Every commune is a tear in the nation, a secession from government, an exodus from the dominant value system” (p. 6). It is for this reason, then, that of the three major works Tari credits as having established “an alternative interpretation of contemporary history and that have acted within movements as propellers of practical imagination”(p. 1)—Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s *Empire* (2001), *Colectivo Situaciones' 19 & 20*, The Invisible Committee’s *The Coming Insurrection* (2008)—this renewal of the commune is an honor enjoyed by *Colectivo Situaciones* alone.

And yet... what persists as the virtue of Tari’s reading immediately confronts us as its limit, insofar as it remains silent on the twofold manner by which *destituent power* was not only problematized, but ultimately rendered untenable vis-a-vis the project of continuing the process that began with the insurrection of 2001. As Verónica Gago notes, “...there were two different readings that closed off the indeterminacy of destituent power. One, which operated on a continental scale, was the sociological classification of the multitudinous under the all-

encompassing category of 'social movements [...] The notion of 'social movement' was turned into a credential for legibility [...] It functioned, to a large extent, as a mode of stabilization that froze certain ways of doing and thinking that were out of phase in respect to the new dynamics of mobilization. The second closure was the displacement — in a literal way in Argentina, as well as in a broad sense in all of the countries of the 'progressive' cycle — of the idea of the destituent as the renewal of the idea of "coup" against the government: now the right was 'destituent.' The destituent thus went from referring to the indeterminacy of popular forces to a threat that required a call to defend the government" (Verónica Gago, 'Intellectuals, Experiences, and Militant Investigations: Avatars of a Tense Relation').

The manner by which Tari views the commune and destituent power as the summation of the past two decades of struggles, ultimately, presents us with a still-too-partial account of what persists as the problematic nexus of theory-praxis, which we have inherited from the 'Ballad of Buenos Aires' that took place during the 19th and 20th of December, 2001. If the commune is not *the* question of our time, it is because it functions as a constituent element of the more fundamental question that structures the current conjuncture: *what is the relationship between the commune and internationalism?* From this question that several other questions inevitably follow, some of which make for an inevitably painful series of reflections: *What is achieved if 'women, life, and freedom' are no longer mere slogans but the concrete and lived reality of Kurdish and Iranian women in Iran, if their freedom depends on the continuation of the Islamic Republic's opportunism with respect to the question of Palestinian liberation? What good is a proliferation of communes if they remain subject to the requirements of the capitalist world market? And what are the commune's capacities for addressing the micro-fascisms of intra-/inter-group desire so as to avoid the disappointment that always appears in the form of the inevitable?*

It is here, as a participant in the new era of already-existing (feminist) internationalism currently underway, that the destituent commune will discover the real extent of its capacities and what destitution is really worth.

Viewed from this vantage point, it is not hard to see that others have already addressed the persisting limitations of this way of understanding the political content of destituent power—especially in light of the fact that Argentine "social movements" have come to be associated with the recent discourse on the notion. By virtue of the practices of *translating* and adapting the strategies and tactics of previous conjunctures that contemporary struggles in general, and feminist struggles in particular, have rediscovered *internationalism* as a form of life that is not itself a form-determination of capitalist value. Thus, alongside that *destituent* demand that 'all of them must go and *not one less* [ni uno solo]' appears the feminist refusal of *Ni Una Menos*. It is a refusal founded not simply on the deprivation of power in the halls and institutions of a particular nation-state (e.g., Argentina), but on the internationalism developed via feminist practices of *translating* the strike-tactic for struggles waged outside traditional sites of production. Thus, *internationalism*. Nothing is as urgent and as necessary, for we are all too familiar with what becomes of 'the commune' and 'revolution' in its absence: "something as alien to history as the

proletariat is alien to this world; for whom false consciousness becomes its natural condition; the spectacle, its element; the apparent opposition of imperialist and anti-imperialist actors, its universal frame of reference" (Mustapha Khayati, 'Two Local Wars,' 967). ***If Marx was right to say that the proletariat is either revolutionary or it is nothing, then this proletariat is either internationalist or it is not.***

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